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# Macalester Today Spring 2012

Macalester College

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# Macalester Today

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- Growing Interest in Global Health
- 1960s Knoxville College Exchange



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Mac study abroad students cover the world  
with their cameras. SEE PAGE 12



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# Letters



## Why we work

Although I, too, would have enjoyed traveling the world with my possessions on my back and being “unemployed by choice,” as Alese Colehour’s letter put it (“Represent the rest of us,” Winter 2012), my post-college financial situation wouldn’t allow it. And I’d imagine that’s the case for many Macalester graduates. While I wouldn’t trade my experience at Macalester for anything, attending was a financial sacrifice that has required me to, as Colehour puts it, “land a salaried job at a large institution” to pay back my parents and several lending institutions. I do not wish to disparage what no doubt were positive and meaningful experiences for Colehour. Instead, I write to shed light on what she assumes are “success stories” but may actually be for the people living them more a matter of financial necessity.

Although I work for a large government agency, my experiences have allowed me to infuse my workplace with what I learned at Mac. And couldn’t the world use some Macalester values right about now?

**Erin Gullikson '07**  
South Bend, Ind.

## Kudos

The Winter 2012 issue of *Macalester Today* arrived yesterday, and it is absolutely sensational. The color, layout and page design, and interesting and varied articles are all remarkable. Kudos to the folks who produced this issue.

**Aileen Konhauser**  
State College, Penn.

## Respect my beliefs

A recent article (“Breaking Rank,” Winter 2012) disparaged my beliefs and those of many other alumni and students by calling it a “dubious distinction” that Mac has been ranked as a school with a low number of religious students. Apparently the author believes there’s something wrong with that. As a nonreligious alumnus, I take offense at that. I seriously doubt this publication would say something like, “Iran has the dubious distinction of having a large Muslim population.” It is just as unacceptable to say the same thing about those of us who are not religious. Recent studies have found that atheists are the least trusted minority group in America. Please do not perpetuate the idea that there is something wrong with nonreligious people. This demonizes a large portion of the Macalester community.

**Scott T. Macdonell '06**  
Austin, Texas

## More on Frosh of 1939

Editor’s note: In the Winter 2012 issue, Connie Cronon Thurber ’43 wrote to identify three women

shown in the photo below, labeled “Girls at Frosh Camp, 1939” (“Bagpipes and Bells,” Spring 2011). Thurber noted that she is shown standing left of center next to the blanket roll, Beth Carlander Day ’43 is seated at right, and Louise Nelson Carter ’43 is seated in the car. Now we’ve heard from Dora Dunn McCollister ’43, who could identify most of the remaining women: “Catherine Wetteland Stoven ’43 is standing behind the car; sitting on the fender is Madeline Silver Glader (deceased); standing as a threesome (left to right) are Virginia



Povey Strauch ’43, me, and Jean Wilkinson Priebe (deceased).”

## Correction

In the recent story about Stephen Vander Schaaf ’78 (“Housing Honcho,” Winter 2012), his Accessible Space cofounder Chuck Berg ’78 was called a founder of HealthPartners. It should have been noted that this is the organization Health Partners, Inc. of Connecticut rather than Minneapolis-based company HealthPartners.

### LETTERS POLICY

We invite letters of 300 words or fewer. Letters may be edited for clarity, style, and space and will be published based on their relevance to issues discussed in *Macalester Today*. You can send letters to [llamb@macalester.edu](mailto:llamb@macalester.edu) or to *Macalester Today*, Macalester College, 1600 Grand Ave., St. Paul, MN 55105.



# A Column about Nothing

BY BRIAN ROSENBERG

*"I think I can sum up the show for you with one word: nothing."*

—George Costanza

WRITING A SHORT COLUMN three or four times a year might not seem like difficult work, but let me tell you—after almost nine years the well begins to run a little dry.

How many times, and in how many different ways can I praise the values and virtues of a rigorous liberal arts education? (Some would opine that my capacity for repetition here is nearly infinite). Athletics? Done. The arts? Done. Alumni engagement? Done and done again. Global citizenship? To quote John McEnroe—you cannot be serious.

For the past several years I've been writing in one form or another about the *Step Forward* campaign for Macalester, but that campaign was concluded successfully at the end of 2011, and a call for everyone to *Pause* doesn't have quite the same inspirational effect.

So since nothing jumped immediately to mind as I pondered potential subjects for this column, I thought that I might try writing a column about nothing.

There is, it turns out, something of a literary sub-genre made up of works about nothing. A quick online search turned up more than a dozen poems ostensibly about "nothing," though in truth most of these are pretty awful and actually about the author's absence of any poetic gift. Here is my favorite quatrain, from "A Poem about Nothing" by an-author-who-shall-mercifully-remain-nameless:

*The crashing waves of ecstasy  
will be missing from my verse.  
There will no expletive adjectives  
or headless-chicken curse.*

I have no idea what that last line means—so I suppose in that sense it is indeed about nothing.

There are several short stories about nothing whose quality is more or less in line with that of the poems and a hip hop/rap album



called *Stories about Nothing*. One of the songs on the album is entitled (and spelled) "Pergatory." Whimsical wordplay or misspelling? You make the call.

The greatest novelist to take a serious stab at writing about nothing might be Gustave Flaubert, who famously observed, in the midst of composing *Madame Bovary*, that "What seems beautiful to me, what I should like to write, is a book about nothing, a book dependent on nothing external, which would be held together by the strength of its style... a book which would have almost no subject, or at least in which the subject would be almost invisible, if such a thing is possible." Fortunately Flaubert failed in his attempt, since *Madame Bovary* is in fact about many things, nothing not being among them.

The visual arts also have their champions of nothing. Best known among them may be Andy Warhol, who noted the following about his Campbell's Soup Cans series: "I wanted to

paint nothing. I was looking for something that was the essence of nothing and the soup can was it." He may have come closer to realizing his ideal than did Flaubert, though it is worth noting that in 2010 one of his soup can paintings was sold by Christie's for just over \$9 million. That's a lot of something for a painting of nothing.

But the artistic apotheosis of nothingness surely belongs to the composer John Cage, whose most controversial work, *4'33"*, consists of—you guessed it—four minutes and thirty-three seconds of silence. I suppose one could also call the piece the nadir of nothingness, but since it consists of nothing that would be pretty much the same thing. It is the ultimate all-purpose composition, suitable not only for weddings and Bar Mitzvahs but for business meetings, political rallies, and professional sporting events. It is the only piece

ever written that cannot be drowned out by crowd noise.

Anyway, I'm feeling pretty good about my own attempt to fill space with reflections on nothing. I've been checking the word count as I've been writing—not something I would recommend, since it's sort of like watching a clock hoping that time will pass more quickly—and somehow I have managed to make it to 679. 680. 681. That might not seem impressive if I were writing about something, but considering that I'm writing about nothing it—how fitting that the 700th word in a column about nothing is *it*—seems to me a pretty darn noteworthy accomplishment.

I will, however, accept no congratulations.

It was nothing. ■

**BRIAN ROSENBERG**, the president of Macalester, writes a regular column for Macalester Today. He can be reached at [rosenbergb@macalester.edu](mailto:rosenbergb@macalester.edu).



# Summit to St. Clair

## CAMPUS NEWS SUMMARY



TO HEAR THE ENTHUSIASM of these four senior math majors, you'd think the women had won the lottery—and they kind of have. Finding a major you love and are really good at—that's pretty much the college jackpot.

Seniors **Cecylia Bocovich** (Coon Rapids, Minn.), **Elise delMas** (St. Paul), **Wanyi Li** (Shanghai), and **Jeanmarie Youngblood** (Brooklyn, N.Y.) have all been caught up in the beauty of mathematics. All four are headed to mathematics graduate programs this fall.

Bocovich comes from a long line of number lovers. Her father is an electrical engineer and her mother and grandmother are CPAs, but her plan was to buck the trend and major in chemistry—until she set her sleeve on fire in chemistry lab and realized that what she loved about chemistry was the math. An avid member of the women's hockey team, Bocovich will graduate this spring with majors in both math and computer science.

There is an old axiom that a flair for math is often accompanied by a talent for music, and if true, delMas makes a perfect example. She plays flute in Flying Fingers, a Mac folk music group, and also is active in shape note singing, but finds abstract algebra equally beautiful. "Everything is a puzzle to figure out," she says. "I like the logic and the proofs; there's such elegance."

In Li's country, the liberal arts college remains an anomaly. She's majoring in applied math and economics, and minoring in computer science and psychology. Says Li, "I never could have done that in China." She's particularly interested in mathematical modeling, which, as she puts it, "makes the unobservable, observable." Her honors thesis deals with the influence of elementary school attendance zones on Shanghai's housing market.

Youngblood specializes in graph theory, which has to do with computer networks. She received an Outstanding Presentation award at the 2012 Joint Mathematics Meetings, the

world's largest annual math meeting. She's also majoring in educational studies and has tutored students in math through several local programs. On school breaks she often competes in national Scrabble competitions "just for fun."

All four women are quick to credit the Macalester faculty for their success. "I've never met a group of people so focused on helping students advance," says Bocovich. "But the best thing is to see people you respect happy doing what you hope to do."

PHOTO: DAVID J. TURNER





# Summit to St. Clair

CAMPUS NEWS SUMMARY

## WORLDWIDE FRIENDSHIPS

GROWING UP IN Springfield, Ill., in the very center of America, **Donovan Kavish '13** never had a chance to travel overseas. Indeed, in this Middle American city of 118,000—best known as the home of Abraham Lin-

Macedonia), whose family Kavish visited before he began his SIT program in Belgrade. He chose that particular study abroad program both because of his Eastern European friends and because its subject matter, "Peace and Conflict Studies in the Balkans," is of special interest to him.

Kavish—an international studies and media studies major—knew he was headed for some cross-cultural bumps in the road, but he was ready for that after watching his international friends navigate U.S.-European differences. "Sarcasm is one thing they have to get used to," he laughs. "And another is waiters. What we consider good service—the waiter returning to the table over and over again—they find really annoying."

Then there's football, a sport Kavish was deeply involved in, when as a first-year and sophomore he played for Mac's team. "My family came up one weekend from Illinois and sat with a group of my friends at a game. A friend from Jordan was there who had no idea what was going but kept jumping up and shouting in Arabic. My parents are still talking about it."

As he got ready to head off to Serbia, Bosnia, and Kosovo for half a year, Kavish knew not to expect to get coffee there "to-go." "That is *not* how Europeans do coffee," he laughs. "You better expect to sit there for a few hours if you're meeting someone for coffee."

But all joking aside, Kavish realizes that his friends from around the world have truly transformed his life. He hopes to someday earn a master's degree in foreign affairs and perhaps win a Fulbright to study further in Europe. "I've changed so much since I've been here at Mac," he says, "knowing them, listening to them in class, and having their perspectives on everything."

"One of my favorite things about Macalester is having classmates from all over the world. No one has had the same experiences in life and everyone has something to offer to the conversation. It has allowed me to learn more than I ever could have dreamed of."



Global friends (from left): Dragana Marinkovic '13 from Bosnia, Ilija Prachkovski '14 from Macedonia, and Donovan Kavish from Peoria.

coln—the football-playing young man had rarely even met a person from another country.

Nevertheless, by age 17 Kavish was already an international news junkie who craved a college that would open up the world to him. So perhaps it's not surprising that three years later Kavish is spending a semester in Serbia, encouraged by his best friends—from Bosnia and Macedonia.

Kavish met **Dragana Marinkovic '13** (Bijeljina, Bosnia) during his first semester at Macalester, when they had two classes together—German and Introduction to International Studies. Now roommates, "we've been friends ever since," says Kavish.

Through her, Kavish has gotten acquainted with other international students, many of whom are, like Marinkovic, Davis United World College Scholars. He especially hit it off with **Ilija Prachkovski '14** (Delcevo,

PHOTO: SHER STONEMAN

# RUN JAMAICA

SINCE ITS FIRST Olympic gold in 1948, Jamaica's rich track and field legacy has made the sport wildly popular there. Merge that tradition with a history of Jamaican students enrolling at Mac, and it's no surprise that three of the nine Jamaicans on campus right now are members of the track team.

"Going to track meets has been part of my family culture as far back as I can remember," says **Alexa Simpson '13** (St. Elizabeth), a math and economics major and a captain of the women's team. "Jamaicans love track and field. Watch a clip of our high school championships and look into the stands, and you'll understand the support for young athletes."

Track was a key part of Simpson's college search, but she also wanted to see how athletes fit into the rest of campus life. She visited Macalester after being admitted, and liked what she saw so much that she paid her deposit on the way out. "When Coach Martin Peper first called me a student-athlete, I knew Macalester was the place for me," Simpson says. "I'm a student first and an athlete second, but connecting the terms shows that both are part of who I am."

All three Jamaican runners—**Brent Campbell '13** (St. Catherine) and **Damion Prendergast '15** (Mandeville) round out the group—found Macalester through A-Quest, a Jamaican college prep course run by Dennis Minott. Minott works with international admissions staffer Jimm Crowder to tell Jamaican students about Mac.



Jamaicans on the starting block (from left): Alexa Simpson '13, Damion Prendergast '15, and Brent Campbell '13

Before enrolling, both Campbell and Prendergast spoke with **Kwame Gayle '11**, another Jamaican who ran track. They along with Simpson say that getting advice from Mac students played a crucial role in their decision to enroll at a school so far from home. As a result, they, too, reach out to prospective students now whenever they can.

Because all three are enjoying their track team experience, they also pitch in with athletic recruiting. "When we discover they can run, we try to convince other Jamaicans to join the team," says Campbell.



# Summit to St. Clair

CAMPUS NEWS SUMMARY

## BETTER WRITING THROUGH VIDEO



**K**illing the Verb “To Be” may recall Hamlet’s famous soliloquy, but it’s actually an episode of Mac’s new Write Well video series. Write Well and the Macalester Alumni Reader Project (MARP) are initiatives of Macalester’s Jan Serie Center for Scholarship and Teaching, directed by political science professor **Adrienne Christiansen**.

Because strong, clear, evidence-based academic writing has never been more critical, these two projects are being developed to supplement classroom instruction in college-level writing. Write Well is a collection of 60-second videotaped micro-lectures developed and recorded by faculty members, addressing such subjects as “What is a Thesis?” and the aforementioned attack on the passive verb construction “to be.”

History professor Karin Velez has used the videos with her senior seminar and called the bite-sized lectures “hilarious and tremendously effective,” saying, “The students LOVED them.” But don’t take her word for it—check them out at [macalester.edu/cst](http://macalester.edu/cst).

The second project, MARP, invites alumni readers who work in related fields to review student papers. Christiansen piloted the program

in her CyberPolitics course with promising results. She first contacted 30 former students to ask if they’d be willing to read a student paper and give their perspective on it. “So many said yes that we were able to send each paper to two alumni,” says Christiansen, “who not only gave valuable feedback but also gave students tips on jobs and internships.”

Political science major **Julie Donnelly ’96**, a health care reporter for the *Boston Business Journal*, was happy to step up when asked. “I read a paper from a student and then sent her a long email telling her about myself and my career trajectory, also critiquing her paper, but using criteria from my own experience.”

Donnelly saw this as a good way to give back to Macalester. “There’s currently an assault on the liberal arts, and if institutions like Mac don’t take on the very serious task of preparing young people to be part of the workforce, then I think they’ll suffer. ... I’m glad to see initiatives like this one.”

Five additional faculty members have signed on to continue the pilot project over the next year with the assistance of the office of Alumni Relations.



# The Orange

On The Orange, Mac students blog about their campus experiences—excerpts below. For more go to [macalesterorange.blogspot.com](http://macalesterorange.blogspot.com)

"The first few weeks of school, I found it hard to justify spending time by myself. Though I was longing to Skype with my home friends and watch an episode of trashy television, I felt guilty sitting in my room . . . What I quickly found out, however, was that nearly everyone was feeling the same way. . . . Plus, I found out that other people had been secretly watching the same trashy television shows I had. Double win."

— Heather Renetzky '15

"When I was a first-year in Turck, my sleep schedule shifted to a 4 a.m. to 10 a.m. time frame, with many naps in between, because all my favorite people would stay up in the lounge till the wee hours, doing homework and having popcorn fights. I loved returning to my dorm knowing that at any time of the day or night I'd run into someone I loved."

—Emma Cohen '12

"Sometimes things begin to fall into place and connect like puzzle pieces. There's an inverse relationship: the more broadly you explore academia, the narrower your passions become. Your interests may remain broad, but the subjects you're passionate about become clearer and more refined."

—Collin Calvert '13

"I was just about to fall asleep but decided to check Facebook before bed. My newsfeed was full of people freaking out because it was snowing. Sure enough, big, fluffy flakes were falling gently outside. I ran downstairs. . . and told two of my housemates, 'FIRST SNOW!' . . . Their faces broke into huge grins, they jumped up, and we all ran outside looking up into the swirling snow and laughing . . ."

—Natalie Pavlatos '12



Mac defensive back David Melms '13 is #21 (second from right).




## SUGAR AND NICE



Mac football player **David Melms '13** (Wauwatosa, Wis.) was among the members of the 2011 Allstate AFCA Good Works Team recognized at half time during the Jan. 3 Sugar Bowl in New Orleans. The day before, Good Works team members had coached more than 150 children from the Greater New Orleans YMCA in various football drills and assisted in playing games of two-hand touch football. Melms, a cornerback, was selected last fall to the 22-member Good Works Team, sponsored by Allstate and the American Football Coaches Association and based on community service contributions and commitment to volunteerism. The team also participated in other community service projects during their stay in New Orleans.



A photograph of Veronica Descotte '03, a woman with long dark hair, smiling and leaning on a wooden kitchen counter. To her left is a large white birthday cake decorated with colorful sprinkles and candles. The background shows wooden kitchen cabinets and a window. A decorative white scalloped border runs along the right edge of the image.

Veronica Descotte '03  
with a completed  
birthday cake in her  
home kitchen.



# The Philanthropy of Pastry

Veronica Descotte '03 makes the world  
a better place for kids, one cake at a time.

BY LYNETTE LAMB → PHOTO BY DAVID J. TURNER

ON A SNOWY JANUARY MORNING, the kitchen in the Minneapolis home of Veronica Descotte '03 is warm and filled with light. It's also scented with vanilla and sugar, for Descotte is wielding a knife full of raspberry whipped cream as she frosts a yellow birthday cake for a 5-year-old girl she's never met.

But then she rarely meets the kids who eat her cakes. That's because this pink sprinkled cake—like the dozen others Descotte bakes each month—is the product of her new nonprofit, Cakes on Wheels, whose goal is to provide a birthday cake for any kid who needs one.

Cakes on Wheels got its start last fall, when, while driving home from a meeting, Descotte heard a radio interview with a mother who couldn't afford a birthday cake for her child. By the time Descotte arrived home an hour later, she'd mentally planned out her new nonprofit. "It was such a simple idea I couldn't believe no one had thought of it before," she laughs.

Since then, stories on local public radio, TV, and in the Minneapolis *Star Tribune* have yielded Descotte plenty more cake requests as well as hundreds of offers of help. By mid-winter she was pondering how to use all her potential assistants, and how best to help kids, too. A favorite idea: opening a bakery where she could teach kids pastry skills. "There's a lot of science and math in baking," Descotte says happily.

That's just one attraction of the pastry business for Descotte, who has a background in chemistry and biology. The other is re-creating fond family memories made in the kitchen of her Argentinean home, her mother and grandmother by her side. "I grew up in the kitchen, so it's very natural for me to be back in there baking for people," says Descotte, whose spends weekdays working for a Bay Area venture capital firm specializing in biotechnology. (Of Descotte's time at Mac, biology professor Mary Montgomery says, "She burned with intellectual curiosity—a real dynamo and an incredibly caring person.")

Back in the kitchen, Descotte painstakingly pipes an elegant frosting border, covers the layer cake with pink and red sprinkles, and carefully places five butterfly-style candles on top. She doesn't believe in messing with overly fancy *Cake Boss*-style decorations or elaborate fon-

dant icings. "The most important thing is that the cakes taste good," she says. "I use all organic ingredients, too."

Flavors stay simple also, says Descotte, because that's what kids like best. She sticks mostly with chocolate or vanilla cakes topped with chocolate or fruit-flavored whipped cream frostings. Sprinkles are a common finishing touch, though she changes that up sometimes: a Christmas-time confection was covered with broken bits of candy cane; a three-year-old boy's birthday cake was topped with two toy cars.

Placing the 5-year-old girl's cake on a scalloped pedestal, Descotte photographs it for her nonprofit's Facebook page. She stops only once, to answer a phone call from the girl's nervous mother, calling to check on the ETA. It's the moms, mostly, whom Descotte meets in her new venture. "I try to stay in the background so the mother can give her child the cake," she says. "It's more special that way."

Some of those mothers come to Cakes on Wheels directly, having heard about it from news stories. Others are referred by community social workers with whom Descotte has forged relationships. She often works with the nearby Cedar-Riverside neighborhood's Brian Coyle Community Center.

Next she gently places the cake in a white bakery box, all set for transporting to north Minneapolis. Getting cakes to clients can be time consuming; Descotte has driven as far as Hastings, 30 miles to the south, to deliver a cake. She contemplates tapping into her volunteer network someday soon, connecting cake requests with nearby bakers.

Meanwhile, she's happy to spend her mornings in the kitchen, making pint-sized birthdays so much nicer. "Mac taught me that we have a responsibility to those less fortunate than ourselves, and that one person really can make a difference, big or small, in the world. That's the lesson of Cakes on Wheels, too," says Descotte.

"One cake at a time, I hope to make the world a better place." ■

Macalester Today editor **LYNETTE LAMB**'s culinary education began with her first magazine job, testing recipes at *Cuisine* magazine.





# Study Abroad Photo Contest

From balloons in India to a hot springs in Peru, Macalester students see a lot of the world when they study abroad. To celebrate their experiences and photographic talents, Campus Programs and the Library annually sponsor a Study Away Photo Contest. This year's categories—people, environment, and culture—drew nearly 50 entries; visitors to the Campus Center display voted on winners in each. Winning entries are then displayed in Markim Hall, home to the Institute for Global Citizenship, until the next contest rolls around. Here are some of our favorites.



## Mexico

Photo by **Anna Kistin '12**, Zitácuaro, Mexico  
Hometown: Albuquerque, N.M.

Major: Geography major, Psychology and  
English minors

Study abroad program: Program for Mexican  
Culture and Society, Puebla, Mexico

Every year North America's Monarch butterflies migrate to the same mountain range in Michoacán, Mexico. After hiking from a small town outside of Zitácuaro, Michoacán, I visited one of the sites where the butterflies spend their winters.





## India

Photo by **Catherine Flint '12**,

New Delhi, India

Hometown: Palo Alto, Calif.

Majors: Geography and Educational studies, Urban studies concentration

Study Abroad Program: SIT: Cities in the 21st Century (New York City, USA; Delhi, India; Dakar, Senegal; Buenos Aires, Argentina)

I took this picture on my way to class one morning in Delhi. It's only one example of the many creative ways in which people in New Delhi make a living and transport themselves and their goods around this bustling city.



## Oman

Photo by **Erika Bisbocci '12**,

Bimmah Sinkhole, Wadi Shab, Oman

Hometown: Eugene, Ore.

Major: International studies,

Arabic and Anthropology minors

Program: CIEE Language and

Culture, Amman, Jordan

An Omani walks along the shore of the Bimmah Sinkhole, a circular crater created by limestone that collapsed in on itself and has since filled up with groundwater from the nearby Arabian Sea. Local legend, however, says that a piece of the moon collided with Earth to create the hole. The sinkhole is so deep it's black in some places, though the varying depths create a beautiful palette of colors. The sinkhole's depth is still unknown.





## Japan I

Photo by **Jamyang Tashi '13**,

Kyoto, Japan

Hometowns: Tibet, New York City

Major: Japanese

Study abroad program: Associated  
Colleges of the Midwest, Waseda  
University, Tokyo, Japan

These elementary school students insisted that I take a picture of them with my camera, so I asked one of my friends to capture the moment for all of us.

## Vietnam

Photo by **Alexandra McLennan '12**,

Dalat, Vietnam

Hometown: Altadena, Calif.

Major: Religious studies,  
Linguistics minor

Study abroad program:  
CIEE Vietnam, Cambodia,  
and Laos

Located in the Central Highlands of Vietnam, Dalat is home to sprawling fields, rolling mountains, and several outdoor markets selling meats, vegetables, and household items. This woman makes her living selling a wide range of items, from incense and limes to dust mops and industrial-sized soup pots. Her lips were caked in a lipstick made from berries, which at first glance made it appear as if her mouth was bleeding.







## Peru

Photo by **Maggie Hutchison '12**,

Ichupampa, Peru

Hometown: Evanston, Ill.

Major: Hispanic studies, Linguistics  
and Educational studies minors

Study abroad program: School for  
International Training (SIT), Peru:  
Indigenous Peoples and Globali-  
zation, Cusco, Peru

I snapped this photo near Ichupam-  
pa, a small town in the Colca Valley  
of Peru, where I did a weeklong rural  
homestay. I was walking home with  
my host mother, Barbarita, and her  
4-year-old grandson, Jamin, after  
visiting the natural hot springs. Dur-  
ing my time in Ichupampa, Barbarita  
alternated between wearing the  
ornate traditional clothing shown  
here and Western clothing such as  
T-shirts and leggings.

## Peru

Photo by **Colin Jarvis '13**

Machu Picchu, Peru

Hometown: Madison, Wis.

Major: Mathematics

Study abroad program: Institute for  
Study Abroad—Butler University,  
Buenos Aires, Argentina

The main plaza of the lost Incan city  
of Machu Picchu is shown here, with  
the mountain Wanyi Picchu in the  
background surrounded by an early  
morning mist.







## Japan II

Photo by **Jamyang Tashi '12**,  
Nagano, Japan

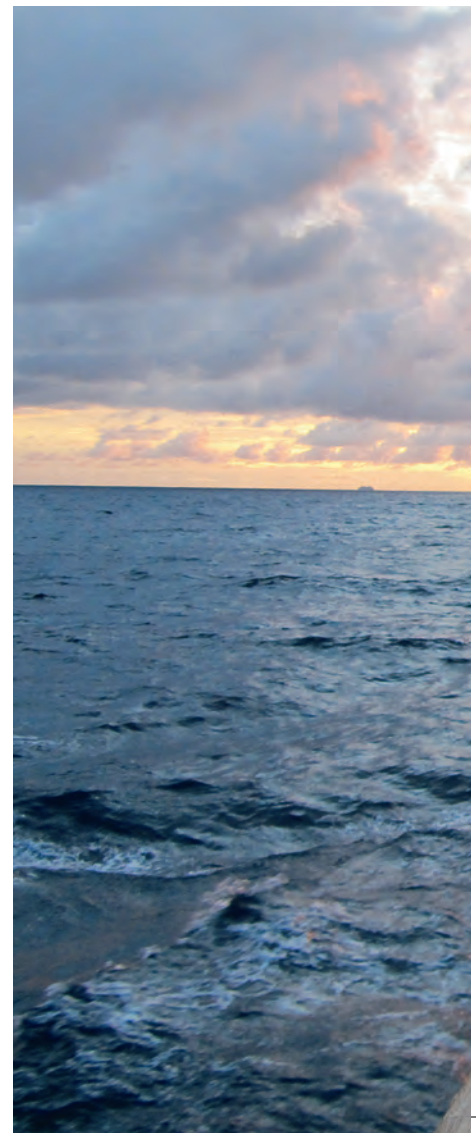
A playful moment I couldn't  
resist capturing.



## Turk and Caicos

Photo by **Kyle Roddy '12**, Cockburn  
Harbor, Turks and Caicos Islands  
Hometown: Saranac Lake, N.Y.  
Major: Biology  
Study abroad program: School for  
Field Studies, Center for Marine  
Resources, Turks and Caicos  
Islands

*Haemulon flavolineatum*, commonly  
known as the French grunt, congre-  
gate in schools as an anti-predator  
behavior. They're one of the most  
abundant fish in the Caribbean Sea.





## Dubai

Photo by **Erika Bisbocci '12**,  
Dubai, United Arab Emirates

In the past few decades, Dubai has transformed itself from a small fishing village on the arid sands of the Arabian Peninsula into an ultramodern megalopolis. Yet many Emiratis are still struggling to maintain their culture. This photo depicts a young Emirati man wearing the traditional dress, in contrast to the modern city skyline in the background.



## French Polynesia

Photo by **Owen Daniels '12**,  
Rangiroa, French Polynesia  
Hometown: Madison, Wis.  
Major: Environmental studies  
Study abroad program: Sustainability  
in Polynesian Cultures and  
Ecosystems Sea Semester,  
Sea Education Association

This picture was taken at dawn from aboard the *SSV Robert C. Seamans*—a 145-foot sailing research vessel—while we were sailing off Rangiroa in the Tuomotu Archipelago, one of the world's largest coral atolls. The speck on the horizon (at left) is the *Balmoral*, a luxury cruise ship more than four times bigger than the *Seamans*. This picture portrays the meeting of two very different sailing cultures and puts into perspective the vastness and beauty of the Pacific Ocean.





**Right:** Attending a dinner at the home of Knoxville College Dean of Chapel Edward Grohman (center) and his wife, Sarah Grohman (back to photographer) were (from left) KCean Horace Andrews, Rhoda Godrich Moeller '65, and KCeans Shirley Spenser and Don Damper.



**Left:** Posing on the Knoxville College campus in Spring 1962 (from left): Marilyn Hoff '64 and Carol Huenemann Eick '64 with KC student James Chandler (seated) and KC public relations director Porterfield Bradley.



**Right:** Shivering on the steps of the Mac Student Union, 1963, (from left): Mary Oesterhuis Snyder '64, Marilyn Hoff '64, KCean Willie Mae Carey Wilson, and Nancy McMartin Henderson '64. Snyder, Henderson, and Wilson were roommates; Hoff was one of the first two Macites to attend Knoxville.

“I was face-to-face with my own stereotypes from the moment I set foot on campus. I remember thinking at first that everyone in the KC cafeteria looked identical, but as time wore on, rooms became full of individuals I knew; color was no longer an issue.” —BETTY HASKINS '69

# CIVIL RIGHTS SWAP



Crossing a domestic racial divide, Macalester and Knoxville Colleges took part in a groundbreaking 1960s student exchange.

BY PAULA HIRSCHOFF '66

As the Civil Rights movement intensified in early 1962, Macalester College began a student exchange program with Knoxville College, a historically black campus in Knoxville, Tennessee. Over the next seven years, 28 Macites—including this writer—and 25 Knoxville students attended each other's schools for a single semester. Half a century ago, we learned that domestic cultural exchanges could be just as inspiring, exhilarating, and transformative as the international ones that students flock to today.

It's hard for younger generations to imagine, but 50 years ago was a very different era of race relations in the United States. This article is an attempt to explore this significant Macalester–Knoxville program—a kind of domestic study away program of its time—and to leave both colleges with a record of this historic exchange as plans are being made for a Reunion to mark the program's 50th anniversary (see box on page 22).

In the early 1960s a wave of civil rights activities was sweeping through the South. Sit-ins were targeting segregated facilities, marches were taking place, voter registration drives were under way. With John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson in the White House, attitudes grew more open toward black appeals for justice, and landmark civil rights legislation began making its way through Congress.

Meanwhile, as members of the Mac community discussed civil rights news, they began to seek a way to be more directly involved in the struggle. In the fall of 1960 the Community Council formed Student Action for Human Rights (SAHR), a committee that organized students to picket local theaters in a movie theater chain that was discriminating against blacks in the South. The idea for the college exchange emerged from the students' desire to take further action. SAHR explored possibilities and settled on exchanges with Morehouse, a men's college in Atlanta, and Knoxville College, a coeducational Presbyterian school.

This was not the only exchange between northern and southern colleges during that era. Carleton and St. Olaf, among others, also had student exchanges. In addition, Macalester joined Carleton, Hamline, St. Thomas, and 33 black colleges in a professor exchange. But most of these programs involved multiple schools and did not last long. Even the Macalester–Morehouse exchange did not survive after the first semester.

Between historically Presbyterian Macalester and Knoxville Colleges, however, a connection clicked. In spring 1962 the first Macites went to KC, and that fall the first KCean came to Mac. Subsequently, enough students embraced the program to keep it going throughout the 1960s.

This cross-cultural experience placed us in strange and sometimes unsettling situations. But the 11 Macites and 5 KCeans who were interviewed for this article contend that the experience shaped their lives in crucial, inspirational ways. Most cherish memories of beloved roommates and cross-cultural discoveries, and recall wrenching though maturing moments. Some believe that our country's young people still need this kind of domestic cultural immersion today.

## Macites Heading South

Most of the Macalester students who went to the South had led relatively sheltered Midwestern lives. **Joan Isfeld Mahaffy '66** and **Pat Smith Shufeldt '67** had both grown up on farms in all-white communities. For **Marilyn Hoff '64**, the break with her past was extreme. She hailed from “a small conservative town in north Minnesota: That was my whole life till I went to KC. I went in open opposition to the wishes of my parents.”

We Mac students went for adventure, just as students go abroad today, to get away from our college and from Minnesota for a while. But we also went to live out our ideals and take part in the Civil Rights movement. “Civil rights was the key concept,” says **Carol Huenemann Eick '64**, who helped establish the exchange. “Some of it was really scary but we believed it was important work. Civil rights was *the* issue of our generation. The fights for justice and inclusivity for other groups started with race.”



“Civil rights was *the* issue of our generation. The fights for justice and inclusivity for other groups started with race.”

—CAROL HUENEMANN EICK '64

In the early 1960s, the Macites who went south participated in civil rights activities. Marilyn Hoff attended a Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) conference in the Deep South over spring break. Driving down with several key organizers, she had to hit the car's floor repeatedly to avoid being noticed as a white woman in a car with black people.

When **Susan Moxley Graham '64** joined KCeans in integrating Knoxville movie theaters, the more experienced organizers “taught us how to act. We had to have a dollar ready and politely ask for a ticket. When they refused, we went to the back of the line and started over. We sang freedom songs like ‘We Shall Overcome.’ When the police arrested us, we’d sit down and go limp. They’d pick us up and put us in the paddy wagon and drive us to jail where they’d fingerprint and book us.”

**Rhoda Goodrich Moeller '65** and I rode the train to KC together in September 1964 and were soon recruited to join the SNCC chapter on campus. We attended meetings, enthusiastically sold SNCC buttons depicting a black and white handshake, and joined an NAACP voter registration drive that opened our eyes to rampant abuse of black voting rights.

Later participants did not consider themselves activists yet had strong feelings about civil rights. **Betsy Wiselogle Haskins '69** decided to attend KC because she had “a quiet passion about the equality of all people. Rather than argue, I had to do some kind of action. Living my life was the way I could express my beliefs.”

Letters that exchange participants sent to *The Mac Weekly* reflected their reactions to the KC experience. **Barbara Woodall Streeter '70** described an easy camaraderie and teasing leavened with laughter. **Ann Ashwood-Piper '67** wrote that Macites found it easier to relax at KC, and **Lynn Sootheran '67** wrote that she was “freer to discover what I’m really like here.”

Few of us actively engaged in civil rights discussions. Says Hoff, “I didn’t feel it was up to me to bring up race issues. My job was to get along with people.” Eick recalls, “Some KC students came from difficult situations where their whole family was scraping together the money to send them to school. We felt reticent asking questions. If we just shared our lives, we thought, that would be enough.”

Music was an interest many students from the two schools shared. Several Macites sang with the Knoxville College Choir. For Haskins, the choir experience “symbolized the wonder and value of the Knoxville semester. We were unique individuals coming together in harmony to create a glorious sound. I came away with a lifelong realization that valuing each other and working together to achieve something beautiful—that’s the prize.”

Our KC dorm mates also taught us popular dances of the '60s. In spring 1965 Macites wrote in *The Mac Weekly* that they would never forget trying to learn the Jerk, the Fat Man, and the Twine. “The experience changed my uptight attitude to dancing,” says Hoff. “When you loosen up and let go, it enables you to think more for yourself. In general that was the culture’s influence on me—that I could do what I wanted. I never danced the same after that.”

KC men liked to date as well as dance, **Dorothy Holmquist Joy '67** wrote to *The Mac Weekly*, creating “a more congenial social atmosphere” on the southern campus. If Mac women dated KC men, however, they

were careful to stay on campus lest they have unpleasant encounters with unsympathetic locals. **Judy Anderson Tolbert '65** remembers one such encounter. She and her KC date were sitting on an off-campus bench after dinner when a car with two white youths stopped. One of the white boys started ranting and swearing at the couple, exclaiming, “I could kill her!” Finally they drove away. After that, Tolbert was required to stay on campus for the rest of the semester.

Some of us expanded our cultural boundaries even further by going home with KC roommates. Haskins spent Thanksgiving with a close KC friend with whom she is still in touch. “Her family included me as if I were a long-lost relative. I ate chitlins, collard greens, and sweet potato pie for the first time.” Others vividly recall taking on academic challenges, participating in theater productions, or going on excursions to the Smoky Mountains.

## KCeans Going North

KCeans, sadly, were more used to racism, having grown up in segregated communities, attended all-black high schools, and struggled with its impact all their lives. Some were already immersed in the Civil Rights movement.

Unfortunately, negative racial incidents were not confined to KC. Ron Damper, who attended Mac in the spring of '65, saw a Confederate flag and racist words on the door of a suitemate after moving into his Mac dorm, though they were soon gone.

Nevertheless, the KCeans, too, had a sense of participating in something larger than themselves. “I was going to be part of integrating society—that’s why I came,” says Frederick Mitchell, who studied at Mac in the spring of '63. Like their Mac counterparts, they were seeking adventure and interaction with other cultures. “Macalester was really my first exposure to white society,” says Dr. Barbara Duncan-Cody, who came to St. Paul in the spring of '66. “We were enjoying ourselves, having new experiences.”

The Macalester welcome, like the one we enjoyed at Knoxville, was friendly and hospitable. “The first weekend at Mac we had a retreat at a large frozen lake where I put on my first ice skates and decided that skating was so nice. Like Hans Brinker,” says Damper. “It was a unique way to get acquainted.”

Wallace Madden, at Mac in the spring of '65, recalls, “I’d been a little skeptical, growing up in the South where water fountains still said ‘whites only.’ But at Mac it was as though color was not involved.” His roommate treated him like a brother, and Professor David White’s classes, he says, instilled in him a lifelong interest in philosophy and religious theory.

Brenda Monroe-Moses, at Mac in spring '67, describes an Easter dinner at the home of assistant chaplain Al Currier at which KC guests sipped wine as they waited for Currier’s sister and her husband to appear. They were startled to see that Currier’s brother-in-law was an African American man whom they’d met previously. “That was the first time I’d ever met an interracial married couple,” says Monroe-Moses.

The experience forced KCeans and Macites alike to confront their prejudices. “I was face-to-face with my own stereotypes from the moment I set foot on campus,” says **Betty Haskins '69**. “I remember



“I’d been a little skeptical, growing up in the South where water fountains still said ‘whites only.’ But at Mac it was as though color was not involved.”

—WALLACE MADDEN

**Top:** Panel discussion at Knoxville College, Fall 1964: Paula Hirschhoff '66 (third from right) participates with KCEans.



**Right:** Macites and KCEans often took outings together in the Smoky Mountains. Here Barbara Wooddall Streeter '70 and KC friends are shown at Cade's Cove, Great Smoky Mountain National Park, Fall 1968.



“The experience changed my uptight attitude to dancing. When you loosen up and let go, it enables you to think more for yourself. In general that was the culture’s influence on me—that I could do what I wanted. I never danced the same after that.” —MARILYN HOFF ’64



**Left:** Judy Anderson Tolbert ’65 and KCean Johnny Ford at Knoxville College’s junior/senior prom at the Andrew Johnson Hotel. This dance was the first integrated event ever held at the hotel.

**Below:** A spring picnic outing to Cade’s Cove in the Smoky Mountains included Carol Huenemann Eick ’64, Marilyn Hoff ’64, and Knoxville College friends.

## Mac-Knoxville Reunion June 1–3, 2012

Between 1962 and 1968, approximately 50 students participated in the exchange program between Knoxville and Macalester Colleges. A mini-reunion set within the college’s larger Reunion will help these exchange students, their roommates, and former professors explore their memories. If you were part of this group, please email Janice Dickinson at [alumnioffice@macalester.edu](mailto:alumnioffice@macalester.edu) with your name and contact information.

### REUNION HIGHLIGHTS

#### Friday, June 1

7 p.m. Macalester-Knoxville College Exchange Program Reception

#### Saturday, June 2

2:45 p.m. Forum/Discussion—Stories from then and now

5:30–7 p.m. All-Class Social

7 p.m. Macalester-Knoxville College Exchange Program Dinner  
Exchange participants are welcome to attend all other Reunion activities as well.



thinking at first that everyone in the KC cafeteria looked identical, but as time wore on, rooms became full of individuals I knew; color was no longer an issue.”

KCean Monroe-Moses recalled an incident that expunged a stereotype. She had returned to the Macalester dorm after encountering blatant discrimination while seeking off-campus summer housing. “My roommate, who was an atheist, knew something had happened because I was so down. When I finally told her, she was so sympathetic, almost in tears. It contradicted what I thought an atheist was,” says Monroe-Moses, herself a lifelong Christian.

## The Program's Demise

The last KCeans came to Mac in spring '67, although one Macite attended KC in fall '67 and another in fall '68. The program's demise was scarcely noted on campus.

What happened? In the late 1960s the Civil Rights movement was taking a new direction. A rift had opened between the young SNCC leaders and the older, more moderate civil rights champions. SNCC adopted Black Power as its new slogan, and expelled whites in 1966. Other groups introduced Black Nationalism. Sensing that it was time for blacks and whites to organize separately, many white student activists turned their focus to anti-war protests.

Macite Haskins recalls having been the target of anti-white anger in KC classrooms. “It was unnerving. The incidents were isolated and far outweighed by friendly acceptance. But I was glad for the confrontation too. Black Power literature was required reading for later classes, but I'd already experienced the Black Power movement firsthand.”

Streeter, the last Macalester participant, was called to the dean's office in 1969 after returning to campus and told the exchange would end. KC was losing money by financing Macites when KCeans were no longer coming to Mac.

Abandoning the program meant that future Mac students would never experience the intensity of that special exchange. And it *had* been intense: Leaving Knoxville College was wrenching for some students, judging by an excerpt from one of Tolbert's letters home: “Last night I got very sad about leaving KC so I went out for a walk and sat and cried at the drugstore. I've become so attached to this place . . . living in such a warm, friendly place for four months makes leaving very hard.”

I, too, had trouble leaving, as my journal from that time shows: “It would be so wonderful to stay on after finals. I want to keep attending SNCC meetings with Yogi and Bobby, talking to Licens all afternoon, having late-night silly sessions with Ramona and D, going to dinner at Grohmans with Ron, Harry, Rhoda, Shirley. When you enter an experience like this, you don't know that parting will be so painful.”

## Enduring Legacy

On a deeper level, however, the program has never ended for many of its participants. Each interviewee described influences that have endured over a lifetime. “It was pretty inspiring to me,” says KCean Mitchell, who has stayed in Minnesota. To KCean Monroe-Moses, the experience was “transformational,” a time of serious maturing in her life. She believes it helped her negotiate life in new arenas, such as politics. She later became one of the first African Americans elected to local office in Jackson, Tennessee. “It made me less fearful of seeking out new people, new experiences,” says KCean Duncan-Cody. “It was a big factor in opening my mind to ideas and different points of view.”

Macites were no less emphatic about the impact. “It was a deep,

life-changing experience,” says Haskins. “Knowing that I could act on my principles gave me a strength I have used ever since.” **Judy Tolbert '65** says that the KC semester “totally shaped” her. Later she studied black history, taught high school courses incorporating black history, founded and led an African American dance troupe, and helped organize Martin Luther King, Jr. birthday celebrations in Fairbanks, Alaska.

**Susan Graham '64** views her KC semester as “the beginning of where my life went.” She and her husband, a U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) administrator, have lived and worked in African countries and become close friends with many African American USAID staff whom they met in the field.

As for me, I know that the rich experience of African American culture convinced me that my life should be filled with friends of many ethnicities and races. I served in the Peace Corps in Africa twice, earned a graduate degree in cultural anthropology, and have spent 20 years volunteering with a racially mixed group at the National Museum of African Art.

But many believe the program had a greater impact, one that went beyond its effects on individual participants. Says KCean Duncan-Cody, recalling her return from Knoxville, “Everyone wanted to know what we'd done and how we were treated. It was a big thing to come back to KC and tell our stories. Most people were really interested. We were talking it up like little ambassadors.”

Convinced of the program's broad influence, Carol Eick '64 points out, “Consider all the friendships and family relations of those involved.” Says KCean Damper, “Programs like this were one of the things that helped in the whole trek toward better relations between the races.”

Adds Susan Graham '64, “It was very different from the protests. It was people to people.”

In the intervening decades, the country has indeed made strides toward better race relations. But Black and White America are still separate cultures in most regions of the country. The races still do not mingle easily outside school and workplace settings. Meanwhile, many parents spend freely to send their youngsters abroad for cultural exchanges, and colleges enthusiastically collude in this, with a focus on exotic foreign experiences.

But whatever happened to domestic exchanges? Says Knoxville exchange participant **David Fisher '69**, who has taught for decades at Collegiate School, a private boys school in Manhattan, “I have so many students who have been all over the world but hardly west of the Hudson and certainly not far into the American South.” Indeed, opportunities to cross our domestic divides are rare. “In our communities we are more alienated and isolated from each other than ever,” says KCean Monroe-Moses. “I don't interact with whites in a social way, yet that's how you build bridges. We're still moving away from each other. Yet what happens to some of us happens to all.”

Despite immigration, globalization, multiculturalism, and tourism, immersion into another culture—either at home or abroad—is still an uncommon experience for most Americans. Challenging our cherished belief systems can be uncomfortable, even threatening. Yet as Macalester and Knoxville Colleges together demonstrated half a century ago, such experiences help us develop a deeper empathy for others, connections across cultural divides, and a fuller understanding of who we are as Americans. ■

**PAULA HIRSCHOFF '66** spent a semester at Knoxville College in the fall of 1964 and will be attending this June's reunion. A writer/editor and former adjunct professor, she lives in Washington, D.C.



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Views of the Alumni House:  
(this page) the refreshed and  
repainted stairway leading to  
the second floor guest rooms;  
(facing page) a peek into the  
parlor, which has a new coat of  
paint and new furniture.

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# ALUMNI HOUSE

BY ELIZABETH FOY LARSEN → PHOTOS BY CRAIG BARES

Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter slept here. So too have scores of famous authors, visiting scholars, prospective faculty, and first-year parents clutching damp Kleenex. Welcome to the Hugh S. Alexander Alumni House, a Georgian brick colonial located at 1644 Summit Avenue.





More than just a bed and breakfast, Alumni House is a gathering place where members of the Macalester community can host anything from a student association meeting to a wedding. It also sets the tone for guests' first visits to campus. "The Alumni House is the front door to the college for many people," says David Wheaton, vice president for administration and finance.

The impressive yet comfortable house was originally built to be the home of the college's president. The land was donated to the college in 1925 and the land and house were the gift of Macalester trustee George Draper Dayton—founder of the Dayton's department store empire—and his wife, Emma Willard Chadwick Dayton. It became the Alumni House in 1984. (The original Hugh S. Alexander Alumni House—named after a geology professor who was also an 1899 graduate—was on the corner of Lincoln and Macalester.)

Although the Alumni House staff has always provided a warm welcome, the home's faded interior was no longer giving the best first impression of the school. "It really needed some freshening up," says Mary Kay Briggs, manager of both the Alumni House and the President's House, located across Summit Avenue.

The college's Board of Trustees agreed. When three anonymous trustees donated money to update the guest rooms and baths, the college was able to dedicate some additional deferred maintenance funds to cover a new electrical system, sunroom roof, and other structural improvements.

When it came time to choose an architect to spearhead the renovations, the decision was obvious. Award-winning Twin Cities architect **David Heide '83** is not only an expert in historic renovations, but also a former Macalester student. "I remember going on walks on Summit Avenue when I was an 18-year-old and being so enamored of the homes and seeing a light fixture or a bit of a house from the outside," says Heide. "It's been a gift to be able to work on those houses now."

Heide's ultimate goal is that his work remain unnoticed by visitors. "The overarching design philosophy is that we wanted to meet

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**Top to bottom:** The spacious sun porch, which opens onto the back lawn; the redone kitchen, with refinished cupboards and new countertops; the second floor Leonard Suite, perfect for families.



what guests would expect to see on the inside when they walk up to the house,” he says. “The only cue that the bathrooms aren’t original is that they’re in such nice condition. The renovation brings the house into the future in a timeless way that won’t feel dated in 20 years.”

The work began immediately after Reunion 2011 and was finished in November. As the donation totals came in, what started as a second floor renovation turned into an opportunity to spruce up the entire structure. “The house had fallen behind what Macalester is about,” says Heide. “It needed to be brought up to the same standards as the school’s academics.”

To achieve that goal, Heide used classic but well-priced materials—including subway and hexagonal tiles—to update the bathrooms. And he reconfigured the second floor, transforming an office and a small bedroom into a comfortable two-bedroom suite perfect for families. The kitchen cabinets were retained, but modified and updated. French doors were added to the living room to improve the flow of guests from there to the attached sunporch and backyard.

In addition, every room got a fresh coat of paint and new drapes were hung throughout the house. Worn-out sofas and armchairs were replaced with new pieces that are comfortable yet fitting to the house’s vintage. The dining room was left largely as is, thanks to its beautiful furnishings, but is now graced by a chandelier for the first time.

The happy result feels like an intimate boutique hotel. Guests are taken care of not only by Briggs but also by a custodian and a small staff of student workers. A map in the airy kitchen—which boasts a gleaming espresso machine as well as a covered cake tray of gigantic muffins—shows where those students are from: Jamaica, New York, Belarus, Ethiopia, Tanzania, India, China. “Guests ask the students a lot of questions,” says Briggs. “In the kitchen you can sit down and get to know them.”

The Alumni House also acts as a home away from home for those international student workers and their friends. Briggs hosts Thanksgiving dinners and Easter events there, complete with Easter baskets and an egg hunt. Students bring food from their homelands. “The kids feel like it’s their house, too,” says Briggs. “We all pitch in and work together.”

That the entire Macalester community has such a beautiful space for these and other gatherings is a source of pride for the staff. “I’m amazed at how wonderful the renovation turned out,” says Briggs. “It’s a gem of a place and a little surprise on campus.” **M**



**Top to bottom:**  
The Cochrane Room; the Davis Suite bath, redone in an era-appropriate style; details from the Alumni House.



## BOOKING ALUMNI HOUSE

The Hugh S. Alexander Alumni House is open 365 days a year. There are four guest rooms, with rates ranging from \$85 for a third-floor room with shared bath to \$140 for a suite. Although rooms are available to the general public, preference is given to members of the Macalester community. The Alumni House is also available for rental as an event space. Call 651-696-6677 for reservations.





# GLOBAL HEALTH

Macalester and its students are part of a growing national movement to make public health a true liberal art.



BY LAURA BILLINGS COLEMAN → ILLUSTRATIONS BY ERIC HANSON

When **Sydney Fencel '12** returned to Macalester for her sophomore year in 2009, the headlines were filled with news of a possible H1N1 flu pandemic. As the flu season heated up that fall, stores were filled with hand sanitizer, makeshift vaccination clinics sprang up everywhere, and more than 600 schools were closed against the contagion. By October, President Barack Obama declared the H1N1 outbreak a national emergency, and even Café Mac started allowing students to remove food from the cafeteria to control the spread of the virus.

Keeping a careful watch on world events, not to mention the constant public service messages about coughing into your elbow, Fencel avoided the flu—but

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE →



"Our lives are so fast and furiously global, students realize that thinking about health is not just for medical professionals—it's something all of us should be doing."

—DEVAVANI CHATTERJEA, BIOLOGY PROFESSOR

caught the fever. "I found the whole thing fascinating," says Fencel, an anthropology major who watched with equal interest when Congress argued over the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act just as she was taking a politics of health class. "I think health is the most interesting thing you can study. Everything is connected to it."

Thus inspired, Fencel spent a semester in Paris tracking the incidence of asthma in metropolitan France. Back home in Green Bay, Wis., the following summer, she used a Taylor Health Fellowship to create a childhood vaccination campaign aimed at boosting vaccination rates among new immigrants and skeptical parents. In her senior year, Fencel interned with the Minnesota Department of Health's vector-borne disease team, making telephone calls to track the progress of patients diagnosed with tick-born illnesses.

A decade ago, this kind of public health experience was reserved for graduate students, where community health training traditionally has been confined. But today Fencel's wide-ranging study of global health challenges is an increasingly well-traveled path for Macalester students—especially those enrolled in the college's relatively new concentration, Community and Global Health.

The interdisciplinary program encourages students to design their own six-course curriculum, take part in at least one internship or experiential learning opportunity, and come together in a senior seminar to share the lessons they've learned along the way. In the four years since the faculty approved it, the Community and Global Health Concentration (CGH) has become the most popular on campus, with more than 71 declared students. Biology, a top major chosen by CGH concentrators, is also Macalester's leading major for the first time in more than a decade.

"There's been this groundswell of interest among students who are becoming increasingly curious about public health both as a profession and as something that affects us all personally," says Devavani Chatterjea, the biology professor who directs the Program in Community and Global Health. "Our lives are so fast and furiously global, students realize that thinking about health is not just for medical professionals—it's something all of us should be doing."

## A trend 30 years in the making

Fueled by job forecasts predicting growing gaps in primary care, by the celebrity status of practitioners such as Paul Farmer (*Partners in Health*, *Mountains Beyond Mountains*), and pop culture films such as



*Contagion*, student interest in public health is a trend that's been widely reported at campuses across the country.

Yet in spite of its ripped-from-the headlines feel, the roots of this trend go back at least to 1987, when David W. Fraser, M.D., then president of Swarthmore College, wrote "Epidemiology as a Liberal Art." In this influential *New England Journal of Medicine* article, Fraser proposed that liberal arts colleges were the perfect training ground for the creative thinking and multidisciplinary approach it would take to solve challenges such as the HIV/AIDS epidemic, which had caught the medical world by surprise.

"The assumption was that we had effectively conquered infectious diseases, and that turned out not to be the case," says Eric Carter, a medical geographer recently appointed to the Edens Professorship of Global Health, who will begin teaching at Macalester this fall. Though breakthroughs in antiretroviral therapy have significantly cut the mortality rate of AIDS, the World Health Organization estimates that fewer than half of the 15 million people who need the drugs have access to

"Some students who had no intention of studying the sciences have migrated that way because of their interest in public health."

—PRESIDENT BRIAN ROSENBERG

them. Health disparities like this make it clear that "medical answers only go so far," says Carter, author of *Enemy in the Blood: Malaria, Environment, and Development in Argentina*.

Fraser's seminal article notwithstanding, the real turning point in global health came in 2000, says Christy Hanson, new dean of the Institute for Global Citizenship (see article on page 33), when a series of reports from the World Health Organization made a clear connection between poverty and poor health, and the threats they pose to economic development. "With non-communicable diseases, it has become clear that the West has been exporting some bad habits, from McDonald's to smoking," says Hanson, formerly chief of the Infectious Diseases Division for USAID. "And with infectious diseases transmitting on airplanes and across borders, it's no longer a problem 'over there.' Good health is in everyone's collective interest."

By 2003, the National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine was encouraging colleges to increase "access to education in public health" with the goal of creating "an educated citizenry" trained to tackle a multitude of growing challenges—from the health consequences of climate change to cutting infectious disease transmission. Macalester joined the discussion soon afterwards—at a series of academic conferences sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and the Association of American Colleges and Universities—as one of the first liberal arts colleges without an applied health sciences department to consider creating a public health curricular path. Since then, other private colleges such as Bates, Beloit, and Haverford have joined the effort, a trend that Hanson believes will only grow.

"Health is a key part of human development and many different disciplines can make a contribution," says Hanson. "Anthropology students are great at exploring and understanding populations and cultural differences. Economists can weigh in about which approaches work best from a financial perspective. Scientists have a huge role to play in adapting technologies and monitoring disease." She spent nearly 20 years working on international public health and infectious diseases before coming to Macalester.

"When you've got this student base of socially conscious young people looking for how to make a difference in the world, they see a home for themselves in public health," says Hanson. "I think that's what's driving its popularity."

## Mixing passion with policy

Biology major **Evelyn Balsells '12** agrees that the wide net cast by public health helped fuel her interest in the Community and Global Health program. So did her passion for solving the hunger problems she's seen in her native Guatemala. "I started off freshman year not knowing what to do with my feelings about fighting hunger," says Balsells, who



will continue her public health studies at the University of Edinburgh. "Fortunately, my classes in the concentration and my advisors' help has shown me how I can channel this initiative in an institutionalized and focused way, so I can actually make a difference."

That training started with a Taylor Health Fellowship that sent Balsells back for a summer to Guatemala, working with the Ministry of Health's Institute of Nutrition. The experience helped her to see how "in public health you need to know policy language and how to speak to economists and ministers who want to know about cost effectiveness. You need to be fluent in all the ways stakeholders look at a problem."

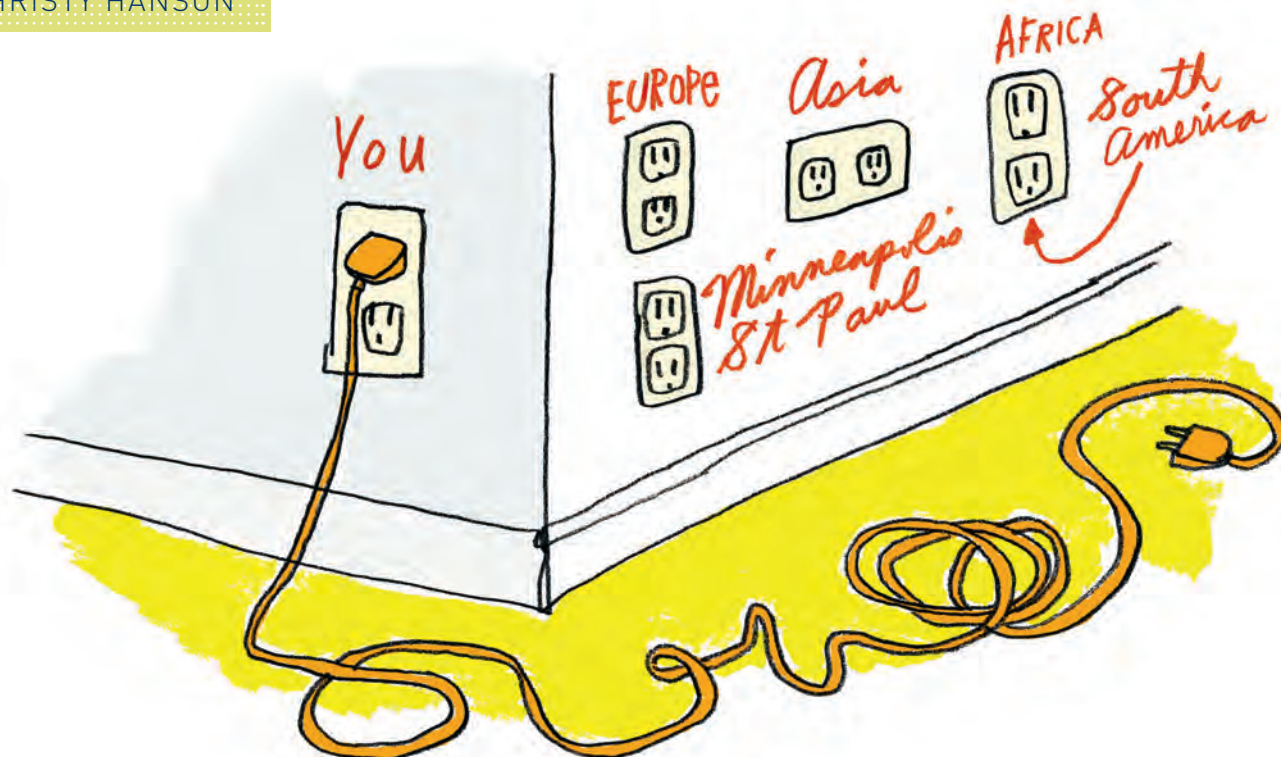
Back in Minnesota, Balsells began work with Open Arms, a nonprofit that prepares and delivers meals to people with chronic diseases. Recently relocated to Minneapolis's Phillips neighborhood, the organization was looking for ways to introduce their work to the community. Balsells proposed a summer nutrition program that would serve neighborhood youth who rely on free and reduced-price school lunches.

Working through the summer on a Chuck Green Fellowship, she met with nutritionists and social workers, studied USDA guidelines,



"Health is a key part of human development and many different disciplines can make a contribution. Anthropology students are great at exploring and understanding populations and cultural differences. Economists can weigh in about which approaches work best from a financial perspective. Scientists have a huge role to play in adapting technologies and monitoring disease."

—CHRISTY HANSON



and bumped up against a series of bureaucratic obstacles. "I found out there was a federal plan in place, but it's not culturally sensitive, it's not healthy, and children don't like it. It was a lot of resources going to waste," she says. "But I also learned why those things were true—the cost of transportation, food storage, farm subsidies, and the food politics behind it all." One of the most important lessons she learned was that solving the problem would take patience. "One staffer told me that changing from serving sugary desserts to periodically serving apples had taken her five years," she says. "That was a useful thing to know."

Open Arms' board of trustees approved Balsells's summer nutrition program, adopting it as part of a five-year strategic plan. Last summer, Balsells's classmate **Emma Swinford '12** implemented the program, serving more than 2,300 meals to kids in one of the city's poorest neighborhoods. "Turning Evelyn's paper into practice was a huge learning experience," says geography major Swinford. "You run into a lot of hang-ups you never thought about, so it was helpful to sit in on meetings at Open Arms and hear them figure out 'how is this going to happen?' or 'who's going to do this?' or 'how do you do the paperwork?'"

Using Mac's Community and Global Health students as volunteers has been a boon to his organization as well, says Open Arms operations director Kent Linder. "We have a really lean staff and don't always have the time to do investigative research or look beyond our current programs. So it was great that Evelyn could take her idea and run with it," he says.

Though organizations like Open Arms are more accustomed to working with public health graduate students, "we've tried to give the students as much real-life experience as possible and not shelter them from the harder challenges we face," Linder says. "The positive energy and excitement that undergraduates bring to this work is contagious; our friendship with Macalester has been a great exchange."

## Making connections, locally and globally

President Brian Rosenberg has been hearing the same from other public health partners who've recently worked with Macalester students. "They're smart and they're highly motivated, and they know what they don't know," he says.

With the environment and global health among the top interests of incoming students, college administrators expected the Community and Global Health program to be popular. But they've been pleasantly surprised at the way in which students in the program—many of them women—have been encouraged to explore new disciplines and take classes in areas they may have otherwise overlooked. "Some students who had no intention of studying the sciences have migrated that way because of their interest in public health," Rosenberg says, adding that anything that brings more women into the sciences is a "welcome development."

Another asset for the Community and Global Health program is that its steering committee is made up of faculty in the sciences, social sciences, mathematics, and humanities—what Chatterjea calls a “truly interdisciplinary group, which is not necessarily true of other programs.”

The many local Mac alumni working in public health represent still another advantage for the program. Many of these alums have provided advice, spoken to classes about trends and career paths, and created internships in their workplaces. One of them, **Melissa Kemperman '99**, an epidemiologist with the Minnesota Department of Health, says, “The liberal arts teach you to think broadly and that’s a really valuable skill,” especially as researchers explore the connections between health and environment.

**Kate Lechner '06** graduated before the Community and Global Health Concentration was created, but has returned to campus to discuss her experiences studying maternal health in Madagascar, working in the Peace Corps and for a nonprofit in Mali, and pursuing studies in public health and nonprofit management at the University of Minnesota. “Public health is constantly changing, so it’s necessary to be a lifelong learner,” she says.

Another recent classroom visitor was **Mina Tehrani '11**, who came to Chatterjea’s senior seminar to discuss one of public health’s harder realities—its lack of funding. Tehrani worked with Somali refugee women at the East African Women’s Center until a budget shortfall forced the nonprofit to close its doors in February. “At first I was interested in public health as an intellectual pursuit, but working with these women and their families made it real and personal,” says Tehrani, who now works in refugee services for the Minneapolis Council of Churches.

Hearing from epidemiologists, immunologists, and community health practitioners in the classroom was an important part of his education, says **Ethan Forsgren '11**, but so was seeing the work up close. A Taylor Health Fellowship allowed him to spend three months at the Minnesota Department of Health’s Office of Emergency Preparedness while working nights as a researcher in Hennepin County Medical Center’s emergency room. “The disparity between government offices and the ER gave me a more complete understanding of emergency medicine than I could have gained in either setting alone,” Forsgren says, adding that fellowship programs like this are critical to developing student interest and skills. Forsgren later started first responder organizations on campus and in Venezuela.

Creating more hands-on opportunities is clearly among the goals director Devavani Chatterjea has for the program. In January she and biology professor Liz Jansen and chemistry professor Rebecca Hoyer visited Kampala, Uganda, where they explored the possibility of creating a global health course that would begin on campus and conclude with three weeks of fieldwork in Uganda. The course may begin as soon as fall 2012.

CGH concentrator and history major **Mollie Hudson '12** joined Chatterjea on a research trip to Uganda last year, and has traveled several times to Tanzania—experiences that have prompted her to consider postponing medical school in favor of doing community health work in Africa. Her dream is to produce a series of radio programs for the women of rural Shirati, east of Lake Victoria, which would cover topics such as water- and food-borne pathogens, maternal health, and malaria. Her dreams reflect one lesson she learned well from studying Community and Global Health at Macalester: “You don’t need an MD to make a big difference.” ■

*St. Paul writer* **LAURA BILLINGS COLEMAN** writes about health and education at ProBonoPress.org.



## Global Dean

BY **MATEA WASEND '12**

After nearly a year and two rounds of searching, the Institute for Global Citizenship (IGC) has a new dean. **Christy Hanson** will take over as dean this summer, after spending a year teaching at Macalester as the Hubert H. Humphrey Professor in International Studies.

She had originally planned to return to her post as chief of the Infectious Diseases Division at the USAID’s Bureau for Global Health, but a year of teaching Macalester students changed her mind. “After getting to know these students, I have fallen in love with them,” says Hanson. “And suddenly the experiences I’ve had across my career have started to fit into a really neat package that is very much exemplified by the IGC.”

As dean, Hanson will oversee all the institute’s offices—the International Center, the Internship office, the Civic Engagement Center, and the Lilly Project—as well as continuing to teach in the International Studies Department.

Hanson has had a wide range of international experience, including positions at the World Health Organization,

World Bank, and PATH in addition to her post at USAID. She estimates that 70 percent of her professional life has been spent working overseas.

Provost Kathleen Murray and the search committee sought candidates with “an ability to bridge academics and practice” in all the areas the IGC embraces. They’re certain they’ve found that in Hanson. “I have enormous confidence in Christy’s ability to guide us through this next period in the development of the IGC,” says Murray. “She brings extraordinary leadership skills, broad intellectual engagement, and a collaborative spirit.”

Hanson hopes to help student fuse their experiences in the community and abroad with their academic experiences at Macalester in a more seamless way. She also envisions a more systematized way of uniting Mac students and professors on themed projects, such as in food security and hunger, the topic of this year’s International Roundtable.

Says Hanson, “We have all this expertise. Don’t we owe it to the world and to ourselves to get engaged and involved?”

*This article is excerpted from The Mac Weekly (Feb. 24, 2012).*



# Writing of Russia

An ability to imagine “what if” took **R.D. Zimmerman '75** from Russian class to Hollywood filmmaking.

BY **JAN SHAW-FLAMM '76** → PHOTO BY **DAVID J. TURNER**

IT WAS ROBERT MASSIE'S 1967 BOOK *Nicholas and Alexandra* that ignited R.D. Zimmerman's curiosity about the Romanovs, the glamorous imperial family whose dynasty ruled Russia from 1613 until the 1917 revolution. A Russian and creative writing student at Macalester, Zimmerman '75 has always found himself wondering “what if.”

That curiosity led him to study and later work in Russia, then part of the Soviet Union. It also inspired him to write his fictional Russian Revolution trilogy, the first of which, *The Kitchen Boy* (2003), was a *New York Times* bestseller and is now being made into a movie. Actress Tilda Swinton has shown strong interest in the role of Empress Alexandra.

Although historians knew that shortly before the imperial family was massacred a kitchen boy had been dismissed from the house, Zimmerman wondered, *what if he actually saw it all—and lived to tell about it?*

The movie's producer, Glenn Williamson, was the executive on such well-received films as *American Beauty* and *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*. Zimmerman serves as executive producer on the film, a role he describes as “a step below—Glenn has all the knowledge and wisdom.”

The film project came about when Williamson saw a full-page ad for *The Kitchen Boy* in the *New York Times*. Zimmerman, who was on a book tour at the time, was just landing in L.A. when Williamson called. “Glenn picked up the newspaper, called my agent, and I had lunch with him that day,” says Zimmerman. “Then it's an eight- or nine-year process to make a movie. You're talking about taking an idea and trying to get \$15 or \$20 million to make it into a film.” The movie is slated to go into production in fall 2012 in Russia and Berlin for a proposed theatrical release in 2013.

Zimmerman wrote the trilogy under the nom de plume Robert Alexander—both to get his books near the front on author-alphabetized bookstore shelves and to differentiate his Russian novels from his earlier mysteries, including three thrillers featuring blind detective Maddy Phillips and five Lambda Award-winning mysteries featuring gay detective Todd Mills.

Zimmerman's life has taken many twists and turns since he enrolled in Boris Gansowsky's Russian class at Macalester back in 1972. In hindsight, the writer is an enthusiastic pitchman for the liberal arts, but he left the college after two years for Michigan State's more vocational hotel/restaurant program. He soon dropped out, however: “I was in Meats 104 and Beverages 110 and I thought, ‘What have I done?’”

Ultimately he returned to MSU, graduating with a degree in the same fields he'd pursued at Mac: creative writing and Russian. He also studied in Leningrad, later working for the U.S. Information Agency in Russia as a cultural exchange exhibition guide.

The resultant grounding in Russian daily life brought him more than fluency. Zimmerman's experience of being followed by the KGB inspired his first political thriller, *The Cross and the Sickle* (1984). At Leningrad University he met his partner of 32 years, architect Lars Peterssen, and together they met a woman who later became their

business partner in a St. Petersburg customs clearance warehouse that stored and processed automobile imports to Russia. They sold the business several years ago, but for a time the business was processing half a million cars a year.

But there's a deeper, more personal side to Zimmerman's interest in Russia and specifically, the fall of the Romanovs. A hundred years ago, his own family was rich and powerful, true titans of Chicago. His paternal great-grandfather Charles Wacker, for whom Chicago's Wacker Drive is named, was a brewer who helped pioneer commercial refrigeration and the director of the 1893 Columbian Exposition (familiar now from Erik Larson's *The Devil in the White City*). But over several generations, the Wacker fortune was largely lost, families floundered, and talented people died far too young. When Zimmerman was a teenager his father died at 46 from complications of alcoholism.

“What made the family great was alcohol—they were brewers—and what killed them was alcohol,” writes Zimmerman in his latest book, *When Dad Came Back As My Dog*. The book, an exploration of the family's crumbling fortunes, is available as an e-book through Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and Zimmerman's own website. “It's a very different kind of book—an unconventional way of telling a family story.” An entertaining glimpse at the lives of the rich and famous, *When Dad Came Back* is also a heart-wrenching look at family life before the tools of Alcoholics Anonymous were broadly available.

Writing about the Russian Revolution became a metaphor for understanding the loss of his own family's prominence, says Zimmerman. “A metaphor is a great way to work things out,” says Zimmerman. “Relive it, but in a safe way.”

Even with 24 books to his credit, Zimmerman still speaks to classes and book clubs around the country, but now does it free via Skype. At 58, he has no plans to retire. “People work all their lives and retire to write,” says Zimmerman. “I feel lucky to be a writer; what I do is who I am.”

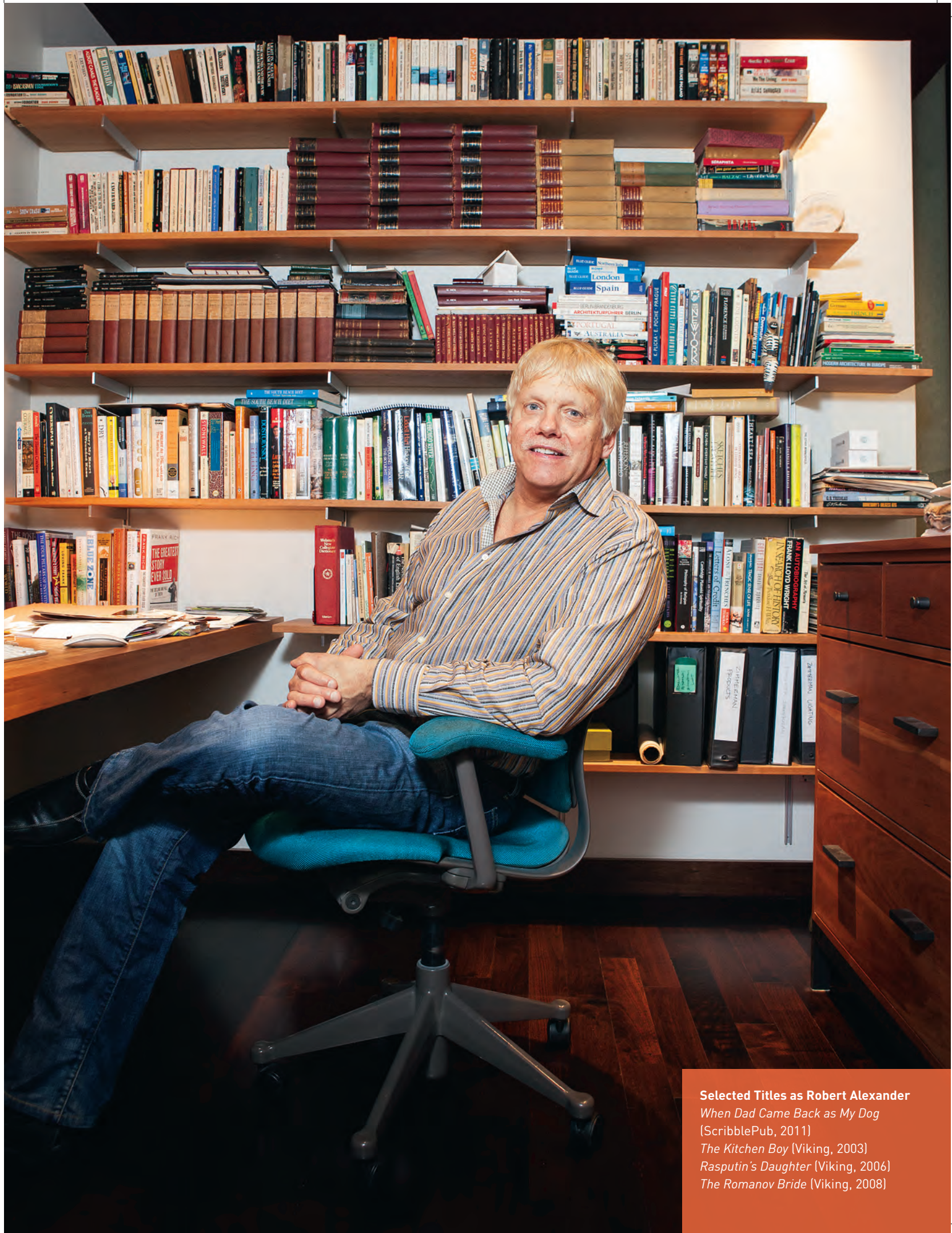
But for now, there's a major motion picture to produce. Zimmerman handles his end mostly through frequent phone calls and occasional meetings and says, “Making the film is very fun and incredibly interesting in terms of the number of smart people involved.” His delight at learning his way around the filmmaking world is tempered by a healthy dose of skepticism about Hollywood. Williamson, he says, warned him, “You're never making a movie until you're two weeks into production and it's too expensive to turn the cameras off.”

According to the blogosphere, historical fiction fans are already looking forward to the film, at least in part because the Russian Revolution is such a fascinating piece of relatively recent history. “One of the Romanov princesses died a few years ago in Lake Forest, Illinois,” says Zimmerman. “She was 103. It's not that long ago at all.” ■

**JAN SHAW-FLAMM '76** is a writer in Macalester's communications department. She was in Russian class with Zimmerman in the 1970s.







**Selected Titles as Robert Alexander**

*When Dad Came Back as My Dog*  
(ScribblePub, 2011)

*The Kitchen Boy* (Viking, 2003)

*Rasputin's Daughter* (Viking, 2006)

*The Romanov Bride* (Viking, 2008)



## BOOKS

**Aaron Bobrow-Strain '92,**  
*White Bread: A Social History of the Store-Bought Loaf* (Beacon, 2012)

**Michael Bourdaghs '86,**  
*Sayonara Amerika, Sayonara Nippon: A Geopolitical Prehistory of J-pop* (Columbia University, 2012)

**R. Andrew Chesnut '86,**  
*Devoted to Death: Santa Muerte, the Skeleton Saint* (Oxford University, 2012)

**Erin Haney '95,** *Africa and Photography* (Reaktion, London, 2010)

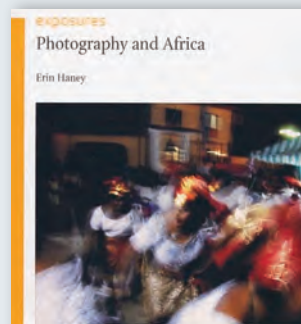
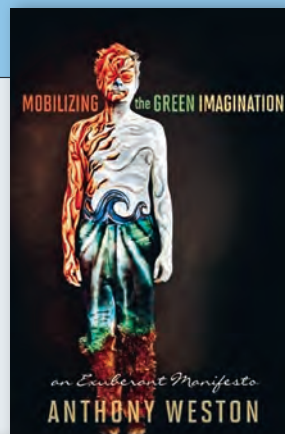
**Mic Hunter '79,** *Conscious Contact: The Twelve Steps as Prayer* (CreateSpace, 2012)

**Stefanos D. Karapetsis '74,**  
*The First Marathon* (2011, available from Amazon)

**Raymond Robertson,**  
economics professor, co-editor with Gladys Lopez-Acevedo,

*Sewing Success? Employment, Wages, and Poverty Following the End of the Multi-fibre Arrangement* (World Bank, 2012)

**Anthony Weston '76,**  
*Mobilizing the Green Imagination* (New Society, 2012) and with David Morrow, *A Workbook for Arguments* (Hackett, 2011)



**SAVE THE DATE**  
[macalester.edu/reunion](http://macalester.edu/reunion)



**IS FOR...**  
**MACALESTER REUNION!**  
Friday–Sunday, June 1–3, 2012



## RELABEL YOURSELF

BY **GABRIELLE LAWRENCE '73**, DIRECTOR OF ALUMNI RELATIONS

**I**t's human nature to assign labels to ourselves, as in "I'm not a morning person" or "I'm a dog person." It's a commonly un-

derstood way of describing ourselves to the world and particularly effective when the description is framed in the negative, as in "I'm just not a Reunion person."

What's confounding is that this comment often follows proclamations of love to Macalester, to wit: "Macalester changed my life. I still think about my favorite professors. Forty years later my best friends are my Mac friends. I wouldn't be here today if not for Mac, but... [pause] .... I'm just not a Reunion person." How could someone be a Mac person but not a Mac Reunion person?

Although there are more than 24,000 Macalester alumni on this planet I've met enough of you to offer some general observations. You are interesting, skeptical optimists who still believe it's possible to change the world. You enjoy learning something new and delight in lively discussions. You seek out meaningful encounters and have high expectations of yourselves and your college. You're serious, open-minded, and like to have a good time. These common traits transcend your religious, ethnic, political, and occupational diversity.

So, how could a Mac person be a Not-a-Reunion person? I believe it's tied up with "fear of Reunion" syndrome, caused by a distorted

perception of what a Mac Reunion is really like. This distortion includes lingering images of tight groups of strangers in looking at old yearbooks, bands of rowdy males reliving their football glory days, and the thought of being trapped in a windowless banquet hall listening to dull speakers.

Reunion at Macalester is nothing like that. It's really less a trip down memory lane than an educational summer camp—sort of a Mac Chautauqua. It's an inclusive event for alumni from all class years (and their kids) as well as for retired and current faculty, staff members, and students. Everybody is welcome at the great Mac community gathering.

There are bagpipes playing on the lawn and people dancing on Shaw field. Alumni from 50 years ago are reflecting on their lives and inspiring our youngest alumni in the process. Young alumni are catching up face to face and inspiring their elders with their lives of commitment and mysterious technology. Mac Reunion is lively, full of conversations and connections across the generations.

So, to all of you "I'm just not a Reunion-goers" out there, I have this to say: You've got it wrong. This is Macalester after all, not an Eastern prep school weekend or a Big Ten Homecoming. This is not about reliving the past, showing off, or measuring up. We don't have class parades, matching T-shirts, or mascots. You might not think you're a Reunion person, but if you're a Macalester person, this is *your* community celebration. Come on back. Your name tag is waiting. **M**



# Coming soon to an iPad near you...



*Macalester Today* will soon be available in an electronic tablet version.

Premiering with the Summer 2012 issue.

Available free as an app at the iTunes store.

# In Memoriam

## 1938

**Glenn C. Johnson**, 97, of Slayton, Minn., died Jan. 29, 2012. He served as a principal and superintendent for several school districts, retiring in 1977. Mr. Johnson is survived by two sons, four grandchildren, and a great-grandson.

**Florene Hubmer Ritter**, 95, of Mankato, Minn., died Jan. 23, 2012. She worked for St. Clair State Bank, which she later owned with her first husband, the late **Robert Zavoral '39**. Mrs. Ritter is survived by two daughters (including **Carole Zavoral Needels '62**), four grandchildren, three great-grandchildren, a great-great-granddaughter, and two sisters.

## 1939

**Dorothy Woskie Nonnweiler**, 94, died Dec. 12, 2011, in Bloomington, Minn. She was a homemaker. Mrs. Nonnweiler is survived by her daughter, **Nancy Nonnweiler Irsfeld '65**, two granddaughters, four great-grandchildren, and a brother.

## 1940

**Inez Zizka Sturm**, 94, died Feb. 4, 2012. She was a social worker and teacher. Mrs. Sturm is survived by three sons, six grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.

## 1941

**Robert L. Wallace**, 92, died Jan. 23, 2012, in Chandler, Ariz. He taught telegraphy and served in Australia during World War II. He later worked as a train dispatcher for Northern Pacific. Mr. Wallace is survived by his wife, Evelyn, four children, 11 grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

## 1942

**Frederick M. Coates**, 91, died Jan. 2, 2012. He served in the U.S. Coast Guard during World War II and retired from Nash Finch Co. as a director in 1980. Macalester College presented Mr. Coates with an Alumni Service Award in 1992. He is survived by his wife, Janet, two daughters, a son, five grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

**Jane Leonard Krengel**, 89, of Eagan, Minn., died Aug. 16, 2010.

She is survived by four daughters, nine grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

## 1943

**John E. Bryan**, 89, died May 23, 2011. He was the founder of Bryan Advertising. Mr. Bryan is survived by a daughter, two sons, five grandchildren, and a great-grandchild.

**Evelyn Kroemer Lechner**, 90, of St. Paul died Dec. 28, 2011. She headed a government nursery school for working mothers during World War II and modeled for Twin Cities stores. Mrs. Lechner is survived by her husband, Edgar, a daughter, a son, two grandsons, three great-grandchildren, and a sister.

## 1948

**Lorraine Neubauer Hensel**, 86, died Dec. 13, 2011, in Colorado. She was a secretary for the City of Denver and a social worker, as well as a teacher and job placement officer for the Denver Public Schools.

## 1949

**Ralph R. Ekensteen**, 91, died Feb. 15, 2012. He served in the U.S. Army Air Force during World War II and worked for the Public Employees Retirement Association from 1953 until his retirement in 1985. Mr. Ekensteen is survived by two daughters, two grandchildren, and two great-granddaughters.

## 1950

**Kathryn Nelson Anonsen**, 82, died Dec. 12, 2011, in New Hope, Minn. She was a public health nurse in Maine, a psychiatric nurse at Hennepin County Medical Center, an adjunct instructor in nursing in Minnesota and South Dakota, and a massage therapist in private practice. Mrs. Anonsen is survived by her husband, George, and sister **Janet Nelson Johansen '61**.

**Robert C. Collins**, 87, of Stillwater, Minn., died Aug. 13, 2011. He is survived by four children, five granddaughters, and two great-granddaughters.

**Janet Douglass Johnson**, 82, of Anoka, Minn., died Dec. 20, 2011. She is survived by two daughters, four grandchildren, a great-grandson, a sister, and a brother.

**Marvin O. Merrill**, 87, died Jan. 31, 2011. He served in the Navy in the Pacific during World War II. He began working for First National Bank in Mankato, Minn., as a teller and retired in 1985 as senior vice president of the loan department. Mr. Merrill is survived by his wife, **Fern Olson Merrill '49**, two daughters, six grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

**Howard J. Nelson**, 86, of Milaca, Minn., died Dec. 14, 2011. He served as an Army medic and ambulance driver during World War II and taught in the Milaca Public Schools for 36 years. Mr. Nelson is survived by his wife, Jane, two daughters, five grandchildren, five great-grandchildren, and a brother.

**Edwin S. Pedersen**, 88, of Luck, Wis., died Feb. 7, 2012. He served in the Navy in the Pacific during World War II and taught English in the Frederic, Wis., school system for 34 years. He is survived by his wife, Donna, two daughters (including **Kathrine Pedersen '73**), two sons, 10 grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

**Corinne Weller Ragle**, 83, of Mitchell, S.D., died Nov. 19, 2011.

**Arvel L. Schafer**, 83, died Sept. 13, 2011. He was a Korean War veteran, a counterintelligence agent, and a newspaper editor and publisher. He is survived by a daughter and a son.

**William C. Snyder**, 84, died Feb. 6, 2012, in Long Beach, Calif. He served for 43 years in the Navy and Naval Reserves, attaining the rank of captain before his retirement. He was also a corporate executive and small business owner. Mr. Snyder was inducted into Macalester's Athletic Hall of Fame in 1988. He is survived by his wife, Jean Barnard, a daughter, two sons, and six grandchildren.

**Doris Meyer Vogt**, 83, of Eagan, Minn., died July 22, 2011. She worked as a medical technician. Mrs. Vogt is survived by her husband, Dale, two daughters, two sons, 10 grandchildren, two sisters, and a brother.

## 1951

**Donald S. Mattson**, 81, of Willmar, Minn., died Dec. 29, 2011. During a medical career spanning more

than 40 years, he did missionary work in Korea, practiced internal medicine in Willmar, co-founded Affiliated Community Medical Centers, and served as chief of staff at Rice Memorial Hospital. Dr. Mattson is survived by his wife, Marlys, three daughters, two sons, nine grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

## 1952

**Jane McEachron McBurney**, 80, died Dec. 13, 2011. She worked at the Guthrie Theater, the University of Minnesota, Macalester College, and Meshbesh, Singer & Spence. Mrs. McBurney is survived by two daughters (including **Alison McBurney Sherman '78**), two sons, and five grandchildren.

## 1953

**Lamae Deutschman Henry**, 80, of The Villages, Fla., died Nov. 20, 2011. She retired as a laboratory supervisor at Montana State University. Mrs. Henry is survived by her husband, John, a daughter, a son, three grandchildren, and a great-grandson.

**Ray F. Saari**, 80, of San Francisco died Jan. 29, 2012. He was a social worker in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and California. Mr. Saari is survived by his partner, Lee Leighton.

## 1954

**Marv A. Davidov**, 80, of Minneapolis died Jan. 14, 2012. He was active in the civil rights and peace movements for many years, and was one of the original Freedom Riders who worked to desegregate bus transportation in 1961. He taught a class on active nonviolence at the University of St. Thomas and founded the Honeywell Project, which put pressure on the Honeywell Corp. to end its production of anti-personnel weapons. Mr. Davidov is survived by a brother.

## 1955

**Shirley Spencer Harper** died Dec. 8, 2011. She was a retired social worker. Mrs. Harper is survived by her husband, **Richard Harper '51**, two daughters (including **Emily Harper Levine '77**), son **Paul Harper '80**, five grandchildren, a sister, and a brother.



**Constantin D. Mazas**, 83, died Sept. 16, 2011. He worked as a research chemist, technical director, and chemical engineer. Mr. Mazas is survived by his wife, Bobbie, a daughter, a son, two grandchildren, and a sister.

## 1956

**Gary R. Hostetler**, 81, of Mounds View, Minn., died July 1, 2011. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps as a staff sergeant during the Korean War. Mr. Hostetler is survived by his wife, **Kathryn Babcock Hostetler '54**, a daughter, three sons, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and two sisters.

**Mavis Bren Knudson**, 75, of Edina, Minn., died Sept. 5, 2011. She is survived by a son.

**Corrine Arney Merrick**, 92, of St. Paul died Sept. 20, 2011. She was a retired elementary school teacher.

## 1957

**Kathryn Dahl Leclerc**, 75, died Jan. 4, 2012, in Fargo, N.D. She was a social worker. Mrs. Leclerc is survived by her husband, Larry, three daughters, a son, six grandchildren, and a brother.

**Eleanor M. Trojack**, 95, died Dec. 20, 2010. She is survived by two sons, seven grandchildren, and 12 great-grandchildren.

## 1958

**Pamalee Peterson Holm**, 75, of Valley City, N.D., died Dec. 21, 2011. She was active in her family's business, Oliver's Chapel, until her retirement in 1996. Mrs. Holm is survived by three daughters, a son, 10 grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, and a brother.

## 1959

**Dolores Ruh Heidenreich**, 88, of Mendota Heights, Minn., died Dec. 26, 2011. She was a teacher in the St. Paul Schools for 20 years.

**Douglas P. Rudolf**, 75, died Jan. 27, 2012. In addition to teaching high school history and German, Mr. Rudolf served as a cross country coach at high schools in Minnesota and California. Mr. Rudolf is survived by two daughters, two sons, four grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, and a sister.

## 1962

**Charles B. Anderson**, 71, of St. Paul died Nov. 17, 2011. He is survived by his sister.

**Nancy Vorlander McNeive**, 71, died Feb. 18, 2012, in Freeport, Ill. Mrs. McNeive is survived by two daughters, a son, eight grandchildren, and a sister.

**Alice Torman Myers**, 91, of Richfield, Minn., died Jan. 23, 2012. She taught third grade in Burnsville, Minn. Mrs. Myers is survived by a daughter, a son, and two grandchildren.

## 1964

**Judith Snowberg Tomlinson**, 69, of Tampa, Fla., died Jan. 25, 2012. She was managing director of Sharn Inc., a medical supply company that she helped build into a global business. Mrs. Tomlinson is survived by her husband, Bruce, four daughters, six grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, her mother, a sister, and two brothers.

## 1967

**Charles R. Hillger**, 66, of Eden Prairie, Minn., died Nov. 18, 2011. He is survived by his wife, **Judy Cornwell Hillger '62**, two sons, and sister **Jean Hillger Church '62**.

**Dori Alsop Paden**, 66, died Dec. 25, 2011, in Loveland, Colo. Mrs. Paden is survived by her husband, **Don Paden '65**, three sons, and six grandchildren.

## 1969

**Paul M. Buzza**, 64, of Marietta, Ga., died Sept. 10, 2011. He was a member of Ambassadors for Friendship while a Macalester student. He is survived by his wife and brothers **David Buzza '66** and **John Buzza '67**.

**Cheryl Hunt Kuehn**, 64, of Appleton, Wis., died Oct. 15, 2011. She taught elementary special education for 38 years. She also hosted several exchange students. Mrs. Kuehn is survived by her husband, John, two sons, her mother, and two sisters.

## 1975

**John C. Pegg**, 58, died Nov. 24, 2010. He was a lawyer in private practice for many years. Mr. Pegg is survived by a daughter, three sons, a granddaughter, his parents, a sister, and a brother.

## 1977

**Bashir N. Stamboulieh**, 62, of Roseville, Minn., died March 11, 2011. He is survived by a son, two grandchildren, six siblings, and the "love of his life," Cathy Hartten.

## 1980

**Jane E. Larson**, 53, died Dec. 24, 2011. She was an associate with the law firm of Powell, Goldstein, Frazer & Murphy from 1987 to 1990. She served on the faculty of Northwestern University School of Law and the University of Wisconsin Law School. She retired in 2011 as Voss-Bascom Professor of Law. Ms. Larson is survived by a son and a sister.

## Other Losses

**John Cowles, Jr.** of Minneapolis, a member of Macalester's Institute for Global Citizenship advisory council, died March 17, 2012. He was 82. Cowles, whose family ran Minneapolis newspapers for most of the 20th century, was an important Twin Cities philanthropist, with a special interest in the arts. Says President Brian Rosenberg, "John's counsel was instrumental as we were establishing the Institute for Global Citizenship, and of course he embodied in his own life and work the ideals of responsible citizenship and leadership." He is survived by his wife, Sage Cowles, a brother, a sister, two sons, two daughters, 10 grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.



← **Michal McCall-Meshejian** of Philadelphia, former professor and chair of sociology at Macalester, died Feb. 10, 2012. She was 69. She is survived by her husband, Paul Meshejian, daughter **Sarah McCall Hunt '90**, and a sister.

**Sherman W. Schultz** of St. Paul, who taught astronomy at Macalester for more than 40 years, died in January 2012 at the age of 89. He practiced optometry and built three observatories and more than 400 telescopes. An asteroid was named in his honor at the dedication of Macalester's Sherman W. Schultz Observatory in 1998. Mr. Schultz is survived by two daughters (including **Susan Schultz Anderson '72**), a son, six grandchildren, and a great-grandchild.

**Veronica Wood-Bartlett**, a former German instructor at Macalester, died Feb. 2, 2012, in Minneapolis. She was 97. She also taught German at Hamline University and helped set up a German Department at the University of Minnesota. Mrs. Wood-Bartlett is survived by a daughter, a son, four grandchildren, four great-grandchildren, and two great-great-grandchildren.

# Bhutan Stretchable Time

BY GRETCHEN LEGLER '84

BHUTAN TIME SEEMS LESS LINEAR than USA time. The Bhutanese good-naturedly call it “BST”—Bhutan Stretchable Time. One senior lecturer attending a workshop I’d organized confided in me, as we waited for other participants to arrive, “In Bhutan it is often not a good idea to be early.” In fact, we were not “early,” we were “on time” and everyone else was “late.” In Bhutan “10 minutes” can actually be 5, or 45. “After some time” could mean in a little while or next week. “Last time” could mean yesterday or last year. “Just now” could mean immediately or in an hour.

At a meeting in New Delhi when I was en route to Bhutan, a cultural affairs officer advised me that a common pitfall for Fulbright scholars in South and Central Asia is to get hung up on *accomplishing things* during their tenure. “As opposed to what?” I asked. I was confused, since the Fulbright application stresses the importance of the applicant *completing a project* while abroad. “As opposed to just *being there*,” he said. So I embarked on my Bhutanese journey determined not to be a slave to time and effort; determined to be a “be-er” instead of a “do-er.”

It has been harder than I ever imagined. Westerners in general are hard-wired to think time is real. I am all about being *on time*, making *the best use* of my time, *getting the most* out of my time, *using my time* wisely, *saving* time, and *managing* my time efficiently. The Bhutanese don’t seem to embrace these concepts as closely as I do.

What happens when a do-er is set down in a be-er culture? Three days before the supposed beginning of a weeklong workshop I was to conduct, I still wasn’t sure whether it would happen. I confided in an Indian friend in New Delhi that I was afraid I didn’t have time to prepare properly and that I’d “look bad” because of it. “Be in the moment,” he advised. “Prepare gently but don’t be attached to the outcome.” Besides, he said, Bhutanese culture stresses humility, not ego. “You won’t be judged on how prepared you are. You’ll be judged on how many good vibes you put out into the air.” What a concept! Time and ego tangled into one unyielding knot.

I recently met the vice principal of Bhutan’s Royal Academy for Performing Arts, who a few years earlier had earned an MFA at the University of Montana. “There was a lot of culture shock,” he admitted. What was most difficult? I asked. “The timing,” he said. He experienced USA time as overly structured and stressful; people were always hurrying here and there. He knew people who—he said, eyes wide—ate lunch at their desks and read the newspaper on the toilet!

This conversation took place, by the way, while we were relax-



ILLUSTRATION: ERIC HANSON

ing in the sun just after the second tea break of the day, as the RAPA dancers, swaying and turning on the grassy field near the dzong, practiced for the upcoming annual religious festival.

Buddhism teaches that time, like ego, is just a concept; letting go of both is part of becoming an enlightened being. Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse in his book *What Makes You NOT a Buddhist* illustrates the conceptual nature of time (and space) with the story of the Buddhist saint Milarepa, who invites a student to take refuge from a hailstorm by joining him inside a yak horn. How can one man fit inside a yak horn, let alone two? Think about it. Anyone who has ever been in love knows how time stretches and bends in the midst of a kiss. “When Siddhartha reached enlightenment, he didn’t make time stop or reach to the end of time. He simply was no longer stained by the concept of time,” Khyentse writes; he went beyond it. “If we can go beyond the boundaries . . . then Milarepa taking shelter in a yak horn will be no more surprising than someone putting on a pair of gloves.”

I’m experimenting; gently testing Bhutan time; practicing the preparation without attachment that my Indian friend advised. When someone asks me what my plans for the day are I try to imagine that almost anything could happen: “It depends,” I say. “Just now the one thing I’m sure of is that I’d like to finish my coffee.” ■

**Gretchen Legler '84**, a creative writing professor at the University of Maine at Farmington, is on a nine-month Fulbright fellowship in the Kingdom of Bhutan. This is an excerpt from her blog, *Bhutan Days*.



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After a mild winter, spring came early to St. Paul.